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# The Labour Organiser

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## “And yet it moves”

—Galileo

### A COUNTRY-WIDE REVIEW OF LABOUR'S FORCES

By J. T. BAXTER

Assistant Administrative Officer, National Agent's Department.

Sirens come and sirens go nowadays, and I suppose we all have a common loathing for that warbling note.

The 148th warning in London is sounding as I settle down to carry out my promise to a pressing Editor to write a few lines on how the Party is standing up to it.

#### “Somebody's Caught It”

It would be foolish to give the impression that air raids by morning, noon and night—not to say anything about the evenings when Parties are accustomed to doing most of their work—have made little difference to Party activity. Some Parties have suffered badly through members being killed, and a number have also lost their premises, property and records.

Since it would be unwise to mention places, readers must forego much detailed information which we should like to give. Many will have heard on the wireless of a Labour Institute being bombed; that Institute belonged to a Party with one of the largest individual memberships. Other severe property losses of great value have also been suffered by this same organisation. Socialist comradeship will be felt by all readers to the Parties which have suffered, and to those Socialist families

which have lost members we all extend heartfelt sympathy.

London has been front-page news for the past few weeks, but comrades in Scotland, Wales and the Provinces have suffered for an even longer time.

It is now twelve weeks since Will Lewcock went to one of his Borough Parties on the North-East Coast to advise on the safe keeping of Party records, only to find the Agent salvaging them from a bomb crater!

#### Near to Normal

Another Party in the Midlands carried on “business as usual” for several days with a time bomb uncomfortably near, and to-day Head Office has received a report of yet another D.L.P. having lost its records when the home of one of our Party's legion of Honorary Secretaries was blown up by a 500lb. bomb.

Parties in East London and on the East, S.E. and N.E. Coasts, particularly, have faced, and are still facing, great social problems. It would have been the easiest thing in the world to organise destructive criticism of public authorities, but Labour Agents, Councillors, M.P.s, Honorary Secretaries and Committees of the Party, have been solving the problems instead of merely

passing resolutions about them. The talkers as distinct from the doers have had short shrift from the people, and the Labour Party in consequence is highly esteemed.

In some parts of the country activities near to normal are carried on by Parties. In Normanton a series of propaganda meetings have been addressed by the Member of Parliament, and Party meetings have been well attended.

Bromley, Hartlepool, Clayton, Workington and Whitehaven report good meetings, and joint meetings of the latter two organisations have been addressed by their Labour M.P.s on Pensions and Workmen's Compensation.

Leeds, Oldham, and Barrow-in-Furness, are now arranging public meetings. King's Norton and Kettering have held successful week-end schools.

#### Adapting Party Meetings

Meetings in many places, however, are difficult to hold in the evenings. In addition to the sirens we have a barrage in London which makes it dangerous to walk the streets, and readers will also appreciate the difficulties due to ever-changing transport facilities.

A number of Parties deliberately choose hours for meetings in which raids have been few; many limit the duration of their meetings to one hour. In Birmingham, the Borough Party have drafted a model agenda for Wards to follow in order that business shall be covered in a single hour.

Women's afternoon meetings have been affected in areas which have suffered a good deal of bombing. Generally speaking, however, the Women's Sections meet regularly. One thing is quite clear—the agendas and minutes of many Party organisations are now drafted in a brief, business-like manner, and members are not bored by the waste of the first one-and-a-half hours on petty matters as they were in peace time!

#### Sixty Conferences

The National Executive Committee, in association with County Federations, have arranged a series of sixty or more Conferences on the subject of "Labour and the War." The first was held in the second week of September, and the last is timed for the end of November. Despite the Blitz, and transport problems, the dozen conferences already

held have been remarkably well attended. Members have welcomed the opportunity to discuss the Party's position with a member of the National Executive Committee or Member of Parliament. Only one Conference has had to be cancelled as a result of Mr. Hitler's activities.

The highlights of recent Party activity have been the Annual Conferences of the Scottish, and Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Councils, both of which have proved once again the effectiveness of Regional organisation, given the full backing of the Trade Unions and Constituency Parties.

#### Where Scotland Stands

The Scottish Council held its twenty-fifth Annual Conference on September 21st, and it was the largest and most representative conference of its history. David R. Grenfell, M.P., Minister of Mines, and Mr. G. R. Shepherd, the National Agent, represented the Government and the National Executive Committee respectively. Discussion was on a very high level, and its temper can be judged from the following brief extract:—

"Our Scottish Conference is the first important political gathering since the Conference of the entire Party in May. We conceive it to be our duty, therefore, to make it clear where Scottish Labour stands.

"Scottish Labour has no fifth column psychology. We abhor the warping and diseased Nazi mind. In the struggle to banish it from the earth there can be no compromise, no hesitations, and no weaknesses. We do not merely 'support' the Government in organising its overthrow; we urge the Government to greater efforts, claiming the right of constructive criticism when weaknesses are apparent and insisting that our counsels be regarded as the considered opinion of a vital part of the nation.

"The steady advocacy of Socialism is our chief aim, and we rely on the Parties and Union branches in the country to continue with us in ceaseless endeavour in spite of every obstacle in our path."

Despite the outbreak of war in September, Scotland shows a slight increase in membership for the past year, but the following extract shows that Scotland is not satisfied:

"The successful Parties know the truth of the slogan: 'Find the collec-

tors and the members will follow.' We urge concentration on this, not merely for the sake of big membership figures, but for the feeling of confidence and achievement which substantial membership brings to Parties."

### Lancs. and Cheshire Regional Council

The Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council held its Conference in Manchester on September 28th, when the Government was represented by the Rt. Hon. Hugh Dalton, M.P., Minister of Economic Warfare, and the National Executive Committee by Mr. G. R. Shepherd, National Agent. Here again the Conference was the largest and most representative ever held. Another eleven Trade Unions and Co-operative Organisations were affiliated during the year, bringing the total affiliated membership up to 361,000 which, added to the 120,000 Labour Party members affiliated to the Council, makes the Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council the spokesman for 481,000 persons.

Readers will be interested to note that the income of this Council was £915 13s. 3d., the balance sheet showing an assets surplus of £260 carried forward to next year.

The annual report of the Regional Executive Committee makes heartening reading. Sub-committee deal with organisation, propaganda, education, local government and magisterial matters. Conference on Peace Aims, Home Front Policy, Education, Evacuation, Local Government Staff War Pay and Youth Organisation were arranged, and it is interesting to note the large place of week-end schools in the work of the Regional Council.

The businesslike manner in which matters are dealt with is a model for practical work. Special attention has been given to secure Labour representation on War-time Committees, and the setting up of Party Advice Bureaux of which 111 are operated by 48 Borough or Divisional Labour Parties.

Another feature of the report is the publication of a panel of speakers for Lancashire and Cheshire, and a list of those members of the Party in the area who have qualified under the Head Office Study Course on Party Management and Electoral Law.

Given adequate financial backing by the industrial and political sections of our Movement, the development of

regional organisation in other parts of the country can take place, and the experience in Lancashire and Cheshire, Scotland, Wales, and London, has given valuable guidance in this connection to the Party.

Membership decreases are reported from a considerable number of Parties, and the chief difficulties appear to be that of keeping regular contact with members and arranging for the collection of contributions.

### Some More Mentions

Week-ends are being used to great advantage by collectors, and bonus systems have in many places been substituted for that of depending upon voluntary collectors. Many Parties issue circulars to members since Ward meetings prove difficult.

Southampton started an excellently printed Bulletin this month. Some Local Party newspapers are having abnormal difficulties owing to the loss of advertisement revenue, but it is good to hear that the Birmingham "Town Crier" is starting a new lease of life, under the editorship of Jim Simmons, the well-known Party Propagandist.

The Malden Local Party is selling 1,600 copies per month of its local paper. It sells at one penny and is distributed by voluntary workers. Advertisements are managed by the Local Party, and the paper, printed by the Ripley Printing Society, shows a small monthly profit for the Party.

Halifax (Agent, Miss Sarah Barker) reports an increase of 686 members as a result of a summer membership campaign, and expects to have a solid 600 membership increase for the year.

Ayrshire Federation held an Organisation Conference addressed by the National Agent and Scottish Secretary on September 22nd, which was attended by a fine muster of 83 delegates, and the Nottinghamshire Federation held an excellent business conference, addressed by John Huddleston, the National Youth Officer, on September 7th.

### Consultations

Consultations with National Officers on war-time organisation problems have been arranged in the North-East District to take place in Hull, Newcastle, Sheffield, Leeds and Durham. Men and women district organisers are making special arrangements to visit Parties to tender advice on how to deal

with Party problems, and I should like to emphasise that Head Office is most anxious to keep contact with Parties in these difficult times.

It is clear that many organisations are carrying on—not as usual, but under difficulties; but difficulties are made to be overcome, and that is the spirit in which our Party is standing up to it. Let us prove that we can take it, and make progress.

## NEW CONTRIBUTION STAMPS

The stamp system for the collection of contributions long ago proved its value, for it is a satisfaction to the member to receive a stamp on his card as an acknowledgment of payment, while on the other hand the system provides a check on book-keeping to the Party, the value of which cannot be over-stated.

An improved design for contributions stamps has now been introduced by the Labour Party, while at the same time the cost of the booklets in which these are sold has been reduced.

The stamps are gummed, perforated, interleaved, printed in distinctive colours and available in booklet form as follows:—

per booklet

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 360 Stamps at 1d. printed in Red   | 3d. |
| 180 Stamps at 2d. printed in Blue  | 2d. |
| 120 Stamps at 3d. printed in Green | 2d. |
| 90 Stamps at 4d. printed in Yellow | 1d. |
| 60 Stamps at 6d. printed in Grey   | 1d. |
| 30 Stamps at 1s. printed in Black  | 1d. |

A sample of each booklet will be sent for 10d. post free.

## CANDIDATES WITHDRAWN.

INVERNESS-SHIRE: Mr. Hugh Fraser.

WEST RENFREWSHIRE: Mr. Cleghorn Thompson.

EPSOM: Mr. C. Hackforth Jones has joined the R.A.F.V.R. as Pilot Officer.

## RUMOUR.

"Absolute certainty have I none, but my wife's charwoman's sister's son heard a housemaid in Downing Street, tell a policeman on his beat that she had a cousin who had a friend who knew when the war was going to end."

From "N.U.G. & M.W. Journal."

## LITERATURE

### RENT ACTS GUIDE.

At all times Labour Secretaries and Agents have felt the need for a really reliable and comprehensive guide to the numerous Rent Acts that have found their way to the Statute Book. Such need has lately been accentuated owing to the growth of advice work since the war. Moreover, the 1939 Rent Act which brought nearly all working class and middle-class houses within the scope of its operations, meant greatly increased work and brought many new complications, particularly as to its effect upon earlier Acts.

Our readers in particular therefore will welcome and be grateful for the publication by the Labour Party of the "Rent Acts Guide," which is priced at 6d. They will also lie under a debt of obligation to the author, Mr. G. Grant McKenzie, who has done a very timely work.

This little booklet will be at the elbow of the majority of our readers every day. Advice work is growing, and it is advisable therefore in order to cope with the situation that not one alone in each Party, but many Party officers, should possess the guide and make themselves familiar with its contents.

Twelve copies are 5/6 post free—and this sum is a wise investment for any Party. We may add that there is no lawyer's language in the Guide, for it is simple, straightforward and readable.

## LABOUR PARTY DIARY.

The Labour Party Diary for 1941 is now on sale. This is the third issue of the Diary, and those for 1940 and 1939 quickly found a warm welcome in the Movement and proved their worth to every Party worker.

We trust that Parties will see the advantage of getting the Diary habit extended among their members. They can do so at a profit, for while one copy sells retail at 1/3, twelve copies can be bought at 12/-, showing a profit of 3/-; 25, 50 or 100 copies yield an even bigger margin of profit.

The Diary contains this year a good deal of information of special value and there are new daily quotations.

# More Front-Line News

## LONDON

"Only the confirmed pessimist can now indulge in the fears for Party survival which were, perhaps, inevitable twelve months ago when the incalculable operations of war were beginning," says Hinley Atkinson in a review entitled "How Goes the Party?" in the "London News."

Mr. Atkinson goes on to point out that not one London Constituency Party has gone out of existence in the twelve months, and although the article quoted was apparently written at the commencement of the present blitz the review of London's emergence from a year of trial provides striking testimony both to the solidity of Labour's structure and the courage of our comrades.

Hinley Atkinson proceeds:—

"Stated briefly, every Party has had two major problems arising from the war. The first was to preserve its machinery from collapse under the impact of war-time conditions. The second problem was to adapt the Party machinery for the advancement of the Party's policy in war-time.

"Not only has the Party been saved from collapse, but in recent months there has been an almost unanimous conviction that its influence is greater than ever it was and that its essential qualities as an electoral machine are secure.

"True, there has been some loss of membership. But the most careful examination shows that this is almost entirely due to removals either to war service or by evacuation. It is indeed 'leave of absence' for the war period under pressure of circumstances, and we may confidently look for its return with normal conditions. But a decrease in membership adversely affects the capacity of a Party to increase its total of activities. As we have seen, however, some of these activities have been limited by war conditions, with the consequence that most Parties have, even with a changing and reduced number of key workers, been able to

deal with the problems of first importance to preserve their organisation.

"Thus it is that whilst social events and public meetings have declined, much of the energy formerly used to organise them has been transferred to membership contact. Subscription collectors have had to be replaced, Ward meetings to be reorganised, and it is a fact of great significance both in relation to the Party organisation and membership loyalty that after twelve months of war the average per enrolled member's contribution is in many Parties as large as in pre-war times, and that Ward meetings secure a better attendance. A number of our larger Parties are collecting from £20 to £25 per month on the basis of a weekly penny membership contribution and smaller Parties *pro rata*. This retention and organisation of membership is the vital core of organisation and the barometer of Party healthiness. It is also the foundation of development, as is proved by the fact that a number of Parties are once again undertaking membership recruiting campaigns and in addition embarking on more ambitious programmes of social and educational character."

## FULHAM

The movements of population since the war provides two outstanding problems. The first concerns the constituency which loses its population and much of its membership. The second concerns the constituency which gains by corresponding influxes.

We are not at all sure but that all along the record for achievement rests with those who have been the sufferers rather than those who have had new opportunities thrown in their way. Ought this to be so?

Anyway, here is Fulham which has lost a population of 30,000 since the war began yet in West Fulham, such is the pluck shown, that they have ordered 2,000 membership forms to be used in their endeavours to stem the tide. And what is more the Party has collected no less than £147 17s. 5d. in membership contributions for the six months ending June, 1940.

## SOUTHAMPTON

Though we must not say too much our readers will be well aware that Southampton has "caught it" and is in the front line every day.

Despite this fact, 93 collectors are doing their job and doing it very well, and the Party is organising a Christmas Bazaar which will take place on December 11th. As might be expected, to hold Party meetings in Southampton presents special difficulties, and as a feature of the organisation before the war was the ward meetings of members, these especially present a hard problem. As one way of keeping contact with members the Party this month have started publication of a 4pp. Bulletin. The contents are ideal for the purpose intended and the human touch is predominant. As our friend, Mr. A. Rose, the Labour agent, says, "to keep the Party together under present circumstances is the very devil"—but they are doing it!

## READING

The inspiriting story of the Reading Movement's struggle with the times, and of its triumph over difficulties, is told by Claude Denscombe, the Labour agent, in the "Reading Citizen." There are some lessons to be gained from this story:—

Twelve months ago, when war was declared, our Party decided—(1) To maintain its independence as a Party; (2) to safeguard, as far as possible, the interests of its members; (3) to continue our work as far as war-time conditions would allow; (4) to seek and maintain representation on all important wartime committees; (5) to extend its social activities, so necessary in war-time.

Now, after a year of war-time conditions, it is perhaps good to look back and see how far we have succeeded in our allotted task.

First, then, we have maintained our independence as a Party and feel that our decision to do so has been amply justified.

Secondly, we have done quite a good deal to safeguard the interests of our members and others in dealing with the many problems arising out of the war, and will continue to do so.

Thirdly, we have continued our work to a greater extent than the most optimistic of us had deemed possible.

Meetings have been regularly held. Social events, including May Day celebrations, Christmas sale of work and bazaar, vegetable, fruit and flower show, dances, whist drives, etc., have been successfully held. Educational meetings and conferences organised. We have continued the "Reading Citizen," which becomes more than ever important as a contact with members and the general public. Other activities too numerous to mention.

Fourthly, we have secured representation on the following among other committees and bodies:—Food Control Committee; Information Committee, Regional and Local; Petrol Control; Fuel Prices Control; War Hardships Committee; Unemployment Review Panel, etc.

We were jointly responsible for the setting up of the Reading Vigilance Committee.

Fifthly, our 6d. dances have been successful from the word "Go" and have been much appreciated by the young people who find in them a source of pleasure and entertainment at a price within the reach of their not too well lined pockets.

Whist drives continue to be well patronised and fill a social need.

Altogether I feel that we have reason to be gratified with the fulfilment of our aims.

## HULL

Nobody needs to be told (because we can imagine) what Party work must be like in Hull. Yet they carry on, and Councillor E. G. Carr, the one agent in the Borough, has dealt with hundreds of cases of enquiries of all kinds. In the aggregate some hundreds of pounds have been secured in the cases taken up, these mostly dealing with increased allowances, pensions, supplementary pensions, etc. It has been a great work for the Party.

## N. TOTTENHAM

North Tottenham Labour and Co-operative News Bulletin excites admiration for its variety, interest and usefulness. This is a bit of work by the recently-appointed agent, Arthur G. Rainbird. We have had occasion to commend another enterprise from the same quarter in this issue.

*By the Editor**The Foresters*

# The Wanderlust

## PART 3 (Second instalment)

When next, dear reader, you travel the Gloucester plain look for May Hill, An outlier of the Forest of Dean hills, and 14 miles south of the Malverns, one cannot fail to perceive the great swollen mass that looks so much like half a turnip with a tuft at the top.

That tuft consists of a cluster of pines, ninety-nine of them, and no more. For, so they say, the hundredth tree never grew in all the centuries that pine trees have sprouted on the bald pate of the hill.

The top of May Hill is wild and lonesome. There is a glorious view of the Severn Valley, but at night the wind sings in the trees, an eerie wind that blows from the broad Atlantic. It's not the place for Romance, though lovers do come and sometimes disturb other lovers on the same errand, for, believe me, a country swain in love is no silent wooer.

\* \* \*

Lil and John were no strangers to May Hill. Born under the shadow at Longhope, Lil had been destined to be a school marm. But a Methodist mother who didn't agree with Church schools altered that destiny, so with nothing to do at home Lil took a taste for country walking, and the reading of serious books. She always carried a book, in lanes, in fields, on stiles, on banks or the open hill tops; one knew Lil in the distance by her book.

John, unlike Lil, was a true forester. At 19, after three years of pit life, a kind colliery proprietor had turned him adrift, lamed for life.

But lame or no, John could walk, and an insurance book gave him plenty of it to do. It also gave him the latter days of the week for canvassing and courtship. Not a few Forest lasses had cast dark, fetching glances at John, and some had even enticed him to a walk. But John was poor company.

Bookish and boorish, with his mind either on study or on business, girls quickly tired of him. What young lady out for an outing, or a husband, wants to spend the fleeting hours discussing Darwin or fending off an insurance agent's zeal to insure her life?

It was his bosses' instructions to canvass May Hill, or the sparse inhabitants there, that brought about John's first meeting with Lil. John was ruefully turning the leaves of his book, noting members' arrears, etc., and envisaging the wrath of some awful sheik known as a "super," when round the corner of a gorse bush came Lil reading her book. Why John and Lil should cannon on a hill of hundreds of acres, Heaven alone knows — also why two faces, two books, and two bodies simultaneously should meet only to fall incontinently among the thorns.

Love at first sight? Not here, for one can't love a girl, especially a plain one, who picks thorns out of her nose; nor an awkward boor either, whose language was fit only for—well, the top of May Hill!

\* \* \*

It was a week or so afterwards that John, with his new glasses, again fell in with Lil. That lady, too, seemed to have got rid of the thorns, and to John's eyes her freshness looked good. She had been picking daffodils, and the air of Spring was in her blood also. They laughed at their earlier introduction and together climbed the hill.

That was their first long walk, so long that it lasted five hours. John, in a way, was intoxicated. He had found a girl for the first time who shared his tastes, to whom he could talk books and theories, who understood, and in a measure, shared his

views. It was serious talk for two young folk—ancient history, geology, nature study, biology, for John was great on biology, and it was Lil's favourite study. There was no flirtation that day or ever, for twin souls need no dalliance. John didn't know it (he was too big a boor for that), but in the first hour he had "clicked"; in the following hour she was his—her ugly hero, but her ideal for all that.

\* \* \*

There is many a mossy bank on May Hill; and shady nooks under a hawthorn tree. There are great bosoms, too, of the hill on which one may lie and bronze. There are hollows under the hedges that the centuries have worn out, where one (or two) may lie and shelter from the rain.

What wonder then that that summer, on Thursdays, on Fridays, and on Saturdays, too, when John was supposed to be hunting for fresh clients, he and Lil haunted the hill-sides? Water was to be had and a loaf of bread, and a lump of lard or hunk of fat bacon lasted all day.

And what talks they had. They discussed the uprising of that great hill; the foundation of the valley; its earliest peoples; civilisation in relation to happiness; life's origin, its being and its end. They studied the life of the hill-side; how the hawthorns seeded and grew; whence the grasses came and the scarce crab-apples. Life in the valley pondlets interested them, the water lizards and toads under the stones.

John and Lil brought books to read, Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Hird, Clodd and the like they devoured omnivorously, and, when they could, they bought second-hand science manuals from the stall in Gloucester market, indifferent often as to the subject or the science so long as it fed their abnormal taste.

\* \* \*

It was in September that it happened. A glorious autumn day, on which they had肆uted on blackberries and hausens,\* with some stolen pears thrown in, was followed by a perfect night. As the moon rose over the far Cotswolds they lay on Lil's cloak with their face to the East. Not a hedgehog, not an owl, broke the

silence, and for once the noise among the pine needles, among which they lay, seemed to cease its tireless crackling.

They had been talking of life in the far city beyond. Of homes that young people began and never really finished because babies came and unhappiness and strife and care stepped in. They had discussed the balance in the scale; the joy of having a baby to care for; of seeing it grow; of a mother's and a father's happiness. The scale tipped up again as they talked of the care of other babies coming, but down it came again as they spoke of all the kiddies being round a fire, with the father and mother, too, and games and stories for an evening's fare. It was John who brought the silence, when he spoke of babies dying and the suffering that life inflicts even on the little ones.

For long they lay and said nothing, though John in the moonlight was devouring Lil with his eyes. At last they stood up to go, she with a little shiver as a night air blew on the hill-top. John stepped closer as if to protect her, and for the first time his arm stole round his girl.

\* \* \*

That was it. John had never even kissed her. He had never kissed any girl; never touched one but in casualness, and, shall we say, in cold blood. And now his blood was on fire. The fires of passion it seems mostly burn slowly, like a fire in its lighting, and one holds them as one controls the conflagration in the kitchen grate.

With John it was different. The fires lit not by slow degree till a flame came; his was explosion. He was John the boor, the studious and the plodder, no longer. He was a cave-man. And on that hill-top all that he had learnt in biology expressed itself in one overwhelming thought. It was she.

Not so Lil. She fought. And on the top of May Hill, under the pines, with the pine needles flying hither and thither they turned and twisted, now closed, then broke, ran and fought again, he trying for the throw, she ever facing and upright to the madman.

The hill is old, and so was the fight—age-old as man himself. The old moon always smiles immutably on, impersonal about the winner. Mostly there is one end. For so the world has lived. But there are exceptions,

\*The little red fruit which follows the hawthorn blossom.

And now it seemed that John had won. Carelessly he leaned over for one great caress. But Lil was game and in one great burst of strength she clawed at his face. She caught his left eye and tore and tore again—and then ran screaming down the hill.

John will carry that scar, a deep and ugly one, eye to ear, all his life. And the memory of that engagement.

\* \* \*

After all, though, what is a flesh wound? That heals, and even if the mirror reminds one of it, it ceases to hurt.

It was different with Lil. Soon her mother died. Her father had long since gone, and Lil had her cottage to herself.

Was woman born to forgiveness that she forgave in her heart — on the morrow of the crime? Did her knowledge of biology aid her in forgiveness, or was Lil different from other women? And does love do these things, and forget the err in the greater compliment?

Anyway Lil forgave, but it was hopeless forgiveness. John had disappeared, forsaken his insurance book, gone none knew where.

Lil opened a school and stayed on. Village children benefited. For, firstly, she loved children, and, secondly, she gave them such groundings in science and learning that when they went to the great secondary schools of the county town they carried all before them.

\* \* \*

Way down by where the Severn takes its last great bend before reaching its long mouth, lies the little village of Westbury. There is a quaint church there near 700 years old with a funny wooden spire detached from the church and fifty feet away from it. There is Westbury Court, too, with an old watered Dutch garden that folks come far to see.

John went there and got a job as gardener. One doesn't see May Hill from Westbury, and John tried to forget it. He still studied, and presently his queer character attracted other attention. The great Charles Dilke came to know him and by his influence John left the water garden and went to Oxford.

Perhaps it was John's innate ability, or maybe it was his terrific concentration in his efforts to forget, but any-

way success and even renown came his way. Three years later John returned to Westbury not as a gardener but as a scientist and an authority on the studies he had made his own.

You may turn up the Journal of the Biological Association or the Journal of Anat., Physiology or of the Ray Society, and find his papers. You will find them, too, in the annals of the British Association. At least one abstruse work on "The Growth Determination and Migration of Batrachians" was enthusiastically received by the Society Zoologique de France and republished by them.

But John still wandered in the woods and by the stream sides pursuing his studies, and often he wandered to within a mile or so of Longhope, only to unwillingly retrace his steps and hopelessly turn away.

\* \* \*

And so life in the Forest, and John and Lil, went on. Neither knew how the other fared. But Heaven knows they each yearned to know.

One day I called in at Lil's school, for I was always welcome. That day poetry was the lesson, and the children were learning to recite that story of the Judge and the village maid.

They came at last to Whittier's tragic conclusion:—

Of all sad tales of tongue or of pen,  
The saddest are these—it might have been.

I thought I caught Lil's eye. What pregnancy lies in those lines. Perhaps it was the first time the application had got home. I don't know.

After school we had tea. And after tea I begged one of those printed cards on which the poem was written, and which also bore a rubber stamp of Lil's school. Secretly I underlined those words and posted the card to an address in Westbury.

\* \* \*

Here, dear reader, there is a blank in my story. What happened I don't know. But in a village tucked away in the folds of the Forest twixt May Hill and Westbury is a little Methodist church "licensed for the solemnization of marriages."

That a marriage shortly afterwards took place there, I know, for I have it on a card endorsed "loving greetings from John and Lil." And the bite of wedding cake that accompanied it was the nicest I had eaten in all my life!

# Notes and Notions

If anybody still believes in the possibility of holding a General Election under present circumstances we would commend them to some figures which have been communicated to us from Liverpool. In this city over a quarter of a million removals have taken place in and out of the Merseyside town since the National Register was instituted. These figures are paralleled on a similar scale in certain places elsewhere. It becomes clearer every day that before another election takes place certain of those measures of electoral reform which have been mentioned in the "Labour Organiser" will require to be placed upon the Statute Book.

The last dissolution of Parliament took place on October 25th, 1935, and polling for the present House of Parliament took place on Thursday, November 13th, 1935. The Government do not appear to be in any hurry as yet to introduce a Bill for the prolongation of Parliament, but time now presses and a measure along these lines will doubtless be introduced forthwith. It is not unlikely that at the same time the Government may announce an enquiry into the possibilities of electoral reform.

Since the above was written an official announcement has been made of impending action.

Several times in these columns since the outbreak of war we have drawn attention to the expediency of securing from local Trade Unions greater financial support because of the restraint which war conditions impose on other local party income. We are glad that the Trade Unions are appreciating the position. It is nearly twelve months ago since most of the Unions which subsidised local parties for the employment of an agent increased their grants on Head Office advice and consent. Practically every Party stands in need of larger affiliations, bigger affiliation fees and of other substantial support from the affiliated organisations. An instance of what can be done to help local parties comes from Liverpool.

There the Transport Workers, N.U.D.A.W. and the N.U.G. & M.W. have each contributed substantial increased fees to the Borough Parties (£50 each in the case of the first two and £40 by the third). The E.T.U. and several other unions have doubled their fees, and this looks like playing the game. We congratulate each concerned.

We note from the annual report of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party that there was an increase of 649 members in Scotland during the year under review. Dundee headed the list with 2,369 members, and Linlithgow, Maryhill, Rutherglen, and West Edinburgh were runners-up. The "Labour Organiser" extends its congratulations to our doughty comrades in these places.

The acceptance by Mr. Churchill of the leadership of the Conservative Party appears to have come as a shock to some people. But why should it? We have yet to learn that the leopard changes his spots in war-time. Nevertheless, the fact that Mr. Churchill, despite the mellowing influence of Labour and Liberal colleagues, has chosen the middle of a great war to thus publicly espouse the cause and leadership of Reaction is not without significance to Labour folk. The Conservative Party is the historic champion of self, privilege, oppression and graft, and if any fool supposes that Mr. Churchill does not know this (because he has himself said so), or that the Premier dreams of reforming the devil himself, then that person is in for a rude awakening. Mr. Churchill is a Tory who knows what Toryism means. He knows, and none better, the cause he now champions and the traditions and record of the Party which, on the split-up of the coalition, he doubtless hopes to lead in power.

Labour folk should remember 1918. On that occasion one man claimed to have won the war. The result we all know. Will history repeat itself and Labour be dished again? Anyway,

forewarned is forearmed, and the whole proceeding is a lesson to Labour to be on its guard, to conserve and build its strength and not to be hoodwinked by fair words or specious offers of a Tory reconstruction. God save the people from that! Incidentally, is it not time that some Labour scribes toned down a bit the lavish hero-worship of which they have been guilty. One famous lickspittle in particular who in between whiles of licking the boots of certain public men, has thoroughly cleaned those of the Premier, took upon himself to express the hope that Mr. Churchill would resist the temptation. Why? Is it not better that the nation should understand where sympathies lie and thus be better armed for curbing them?

Yet another reason for keeping our forces together and building them for the trial of strength with the forces of reaction which will inevitably come after the war, is the question of the restoration of the liberties, political and industrial, which have been surrendered for the period of the war. It is true that Sir Archibald Sinclair—not the most shining member of the Cabinet—has promised that everything shall be restored “with the advent of victory and peace.” We may be forgiven for looking twice at the words of politicians, and when Sir Archibald tells us that the emergency measures will disappear with the passing of the emergency, we may well ask who will interpret the hour and date. Circumstances change, politicians change their minds, and there will be nothing like a strong Labour force in the country to insist that the hour of restoration has arrived; and that restoration means what was promised and not some half-measure or continuation of suppressive measures as we experienced after the last war. The Government, too, and not the popular mind, decides on the date when the war is declared to be over. The last war did not end with the Armistice. The official end of the war was August 31st, 1921!

## SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND

This is the office speaking. We have just had our 148th warning. But we “carry on” and “go to it,” though sometimes when Jim Crow dictates we go to it in the nether regions—neither too slowly or too fastly, but with just that necessary expedition that an “imminent” ordains.

Perhaps “Labour Organiser” readers would like the time-table of alarms for one week. Here it is “from somewhere in England”:

### HITLER'S TIME TABLE.

#### First Day

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| Alert.     | All Clear. |
| 10.15 a.m. | 12.10 p.m. |
| 8.20 p.m.  | 5.30 a.m.  |

#### Second Day

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 11.40 a.m. | 12 noon   |
| 4.10 p.m.  | 4.30 p.m. |
| 8.25 p.m.  | 3.45 a.m. |

#### Third Day

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 4.45 a.m.  | 6.0 a.m.   |
| 9.0 a.m.   | 9.55 a.m.  |
| 11.0 a.m.  | 11.45 a.m. |
| 11.50 a.m. | 12.30 p.m. |
| 12.40 p.m. | 1.0 p.m.   |
| 3.10 p.m.  | 3.50 p.m.  |
| 8.15 p.m.  | 6.0 a.m.   |

#### Fourth Day

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 10.15 a.m. | 10.45 a.m. |
| 1.30 p.m.  | 3.0 p.m.   |
| 8.10 p.m.  | 6.0 a.m.   |

#### Fifth Day

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 8.35 a.m. | 9.45 a.m. |
| 4.30 p.m. | 5.0 p.m.  |
| 8.0 p.m.  | 6.0 a.m.  |

#### Sixth Day

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 9.10 a.m.  | 9.45 a.m. |
| 10.12 a.m. | 11.0 a.m. |
| 1.15 p.m.  | 2.10 p.m. |
| 4.40 p.m.  | 6.0 p.m.  |
| 7.50 p.m.  | 6.0 a.m.  |

#### Seventh Day

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 1.35 p.m.  | 1.50 p.m.  |
| 2.0 p.m.   | 3.30 p.m.  |
| 4.15 p.m.  | 4.50 p.m.  |
| 8.7 p.m.   | 11.20 p.m. |
| 11.45 p.m. | 5.40 a.m.  |

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# FOR THOSE WHO 'CATCH IT'

## What to arrange now—a good example

"Somewhere in England" is a local party with a recently appointed agent whom we should like to congratulate upon the lead given to others and to his own membership as to steps to be taken for the relief of those recently "visited" or those who might suffer as a result of another "visit."

The circular and the suggestions which accompanied it we commend to the notice of others in similar areas. The arrangements made are worth copying, and although we are unable to quote the whole of what is said, the following extracts will be sufficient for our purpose. It should be noted that a fund is being raised to carry out the purpose indicated, and requests are also made for gifts of beds, bedding, clothing, boots, shoes, tables, chairs and kitchen utensils.

Our friends in their circular say:

"The local organisation for relief and the provision of food and shelter works fairly well, but I feel that we owe a special allegiance to our own comrades in the movement, and it is with the idea of putting ourselves in a position to render 'first aid' in the form of immediate comfort, advice and help that I make this appeal to ALL members of the movement to help create a fund to be used for this purpose.

"When one's home is wrecked one cannot be expected to know just what to do and to be in a condition to do it. Those of us who remain unharmed must shoulder this responsibility.

"I want all — Co-operative and Labour folk to look upon the Trades Hall as their place of refuge should such a crisis overtake them. If their home becomes one of Hitler's "military objectives," they should make for the Trades Hall where assistance will await them. To help make this possible I want to gather round me a band of volunteer workers who will be on call in case of need, and who will take care of any stricken comrade and help them through the necessary formalities in regard to securing the assist-

ance provided by the Public Authorities. While this is being done we must look after their families and see they are cared for. All this can be done provided you will supply me with the necessary fund for the purpose.

"Please understand this is not an attempt to take the place of the present work which is being done, but a special service for our own comrades.

"Remember the purpose of the fund is:—

- (1) To render immediate succour and comfort to any member of the Movement who becomes homeless through air-raids.
- (2) To help such members to resettle themselves and families.
- (3) To render personal service by helping such stricken members through the necessary formalities at a time when they will be understandably distracted.

"Let the spirit of brotherhood enter into this service to those who are our comrades in the Movement, which we hope will one day make such appalling savagery impossible."

A further circular gives details of how the work of the Party is to be carried out, and the following are the instructions given:—

### What to do if Your House is Bombed

"Will you please note the following arrangements and make them known to all members of the Movement with whom you come in contact.

"Any member rendered homeless through air-raid (either through their house being destroyed, or through being evacuated on account of an unexploded bomb) should:—

- (1) Seek immediate shelter as near their home as possible until the "All Clear" is sounded.
- (2) When the raid is over they should immediately come to the Trades Hall and make themselves known to the Caretaker. (If possible they

should produce their membership card.) The Caretaker will then provide hot food and drink and will do everything to make the members and their families comfortable.

- (3) Later, arrangements will be made for somebody to accompany them to the Town Hall and see that all the necessary formalities are gone through as smoothly as possible.
- (4) The Committee will assist members to find alternative accommodation, either billeted with other members of the Party, or in premises on their own. This, of course, will be done in conjunction with the billeting officers of the Local Authority.)
- (5) Help will be given to make their temporary homes comfortable. Where clothing, etc., is needed, we shall endeavour to provide same. (Many members have already indicated that they have spare furniture and clothing which they are ready to place at our disposal, but even more offers are required.)
- (6) Arrangements will be made for children and old folk to be cared for temporarily until better arrangements are made.

These services will be available ONLY to members of the Labour and Co-operative Movement and their families and will be additional to those provided by the Public Authorities. Non-Party members should go to the nearest rest centre, where food will be provided by the Authorities. A list of these and other information will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin."

## MORE NEWS and NOTIONS

We note with interest that our old friend Ald. W. Withey, Labour agent, Central Leeds, is the Lord Mayor-elect for this great city. Our congratulations. The coming civic year is bound to be one of exceptional difficulty and calling for outstanding energy and a high spirit of brotherhood, too. Our good wishes to a comrade who has worked hard for his fellow citizens, and will doubtless fill the bill with merit and credit to our Party.

A membership campaign was undertaken in September throughout South Wales, under the auspices of the

Regional Council. Good ground-work was put in for several months beforehand by the establishment of campaign committees, etc. Although the Regional Council were under no illusions regarding the difficulties of the times (and those difficulties have since increased in this area) local organisations in most cases showed a responsive attitude and good work was put in. It is too early yet to report results.

The Scottish Executive of the Labour Party is again offering five free N.C.L.C. Postal Courses to members of the Party in Scotland. Any Party may nominate one of its members to receive one of these excellent courses free, and from the names so received the Executive will select the five successful entrants.

Typical problems are mentioned in a letter we have received in response to an enquiry from our friend Mr. Ian Dean, Labour agent at Rutherglen, Lanark.

Here, as in many places, the principal difficulties of the first year were due to intensive war production involving overtime and Sunday work. Naturally attendance at meetings fell off badly and the collecting system was partly put out of gear. Military calls-up now aggravate the situation, but it is cheering to note that no section in the Division has fallen out; all are meeting regularly, but with smaller attendances.

It is typical, too, as many of our friends confirm, that the secretarial side of a Party's work has grown and responsibility falling on the principal officers has increased. First this officer and then another one goes and the work has to be carried on somehow often temporarily by the secretary or agent, as the case may be, until new officials are elected.

In Rutherglen it is good to note that the local units are extremely active and that a request to appoint reserve delegates to meetings has resulted in a big improvement in attendances.

The problems mentioned above are just those which have affected many Parties and our columns elsewhere testify to the zeal and devotion which has helped so many of our comrades to triumph over them.

# JACK CUTTER

## on "Carrying On"

The sirens began to wail just as I was setting out to attend the D.L.P. meeting. They continued what is officially and humorously described as their "Warbling Note" during most of the time it took me to reach the meeting place, a journey which would normally take four minutes.

On this occasion I could have done it in three minutes, but actually took eight, five of them being spent in convincing wardens and policemen that I wasn't out for a rubbernecking stroll, but was making a beeline to a nearby objective.

Although it was ten minutes before the starting time of the meeting, the Chairman, Secretary and more than a quorum of delegates were already there when I arrived. Like myself, they had been "caught by the siren" en route and had hurried along preferring the atmosphere of the Labour rooms to that of the street shelter.

We waited for five minutes, but there were no new arrivals. The street outside was empty and still. "No one else is getting through now," said the Chairman. "We might as well start the business. I call on the Secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting."

And business proceeded its normal course. Minutes, matters arising, correspondence—I had almost forgotten the sirens in this steady procession of familiar procedure, when the distant "Bra-da-da" of anti-aircraft gunfire told us the show was on. As the Chairman was stating his opinion of an item of correspondence before the meeting, a nearer battery joined the chorus and attentions began to wander.

"Order, comrades, please," said the Chairman, interrupting himself to bang on the table with his spectacle case. "Let's have no sub-committees while the Chairman is on his feet. Please pay attention to the business before the meeting." And the little man went stolidly through his agenda as if the "noises off" were nothing more than a passing Sunday School picnic.

There were several ominous thuds. The rattling A.A. guns were suddenly silent and the whole background of sound was a steady drone occasionally mingled with a deeper crescendo as a Hurricane swooped nearer to earth as a preliminary manoeuvre to a new attacking position.

The droning became more distant and gradually died away. A subtle change in the atmosphere of the meeting became evident. Delegates relaxed and grinned at each other. The Chairman unbent, and smiling benignly over the meeting, remarked: "It's no use any of you asking to be excused early to-night. Here you are and here you have to stay until the all-clear siren goes, so just make the most of your time."

He is only a little chap, this Chairman, and he is not so young as he was, but he was as steady as a rock throughout the whole "proceedings." There was apparently no thought in his mind of adjourning the meeting, not a trace of hesitation or doubt in his steady handling of the delegates who had several women among them. His lead was accepted without question and there seemed no air of unreality in the debates.

The all-clear came just before the end of the agenda. "We'll dispense with 'Any Other Business' to-night," said he. "You'll be wanting to get out to hear the news. Thanks for your attendance and co-operation. The meeting is now closed." He leaned back and began to fill his pipe, saying to me: "You know, Jack, these air raids are a nuisance in one way. They have a bad effect on attendance. But they are useful in another way. You get through the business a lot quicker. Just an hour and three-quarters to-night. Not bad, that!"

I am not sure yet whether this supreme nonchalance was a deliberate pose or whether he really felt that way. It doesn't matter much either way. Such imperturbability, whether assumed or real, is no mean brand of courage. Indeed, if it is assumed it is the more courageous.

## MUSHROOM ORGANISATIONS

There are few Parties that have not had cause to complain on account of the diversion of the efforts of some of its members to the many mushroom organisations which have sprung up during the war.

Some of these organisations may serve a necessary purpose, although there is little doubt that others merely duplicate what our own Party is doing and doing much better. Reference was made in our August issue to something of this kind which was happening in East Ham.

While Labour has no desire to thwart or hinder the work of certain organisations, but rather to help, there has been a strong tendency to the multiplication of organisations and the duplication of effort. Our members are well advised to think twice before dropping Party effort for association with the hordes of voluntary organisations that can have no real effect at the present time and which can have even less effect on the future of the people which is the prime concern of the Party.

Another category of mushroom organisations is referred to in an article in the Birmingham "Town Crier," which we quote below, and we agree with the sentiments expressed. We take this opportunity of congratulating the "Town Crier" on its new form and of extending our felicities to the new Editor, who is our old comrade, Jim Simmons.

We quote:—

"The Labour Movement has won a position in the hearts and minds of the people as a result of over twenty years of propaganda and service. The work of its representatives in the Government has considerably enhanced its prestige with many who never thought politically before and some who admit that they have always voted Tory in the past.

"To maintain the position it has won and further enhance the prestige recently gained, it is essential that the Labour Movement should be able to command the service and loyalty of its membership, and especially of those who, as a result of the work and sacrifice of the rank and file members, have risen to a position of Leadership, Nationally and Locally.

"Both before and during the war there have sprung up mushroom organisations that are claiming the ser-

vice and loyalty of some who, at least nominally, owe allegiance to the Movement. Citizens' Vigilance Organisations, Civil Liberties, Tenants' Movements spring up, have their day and eventually fade away; the service and activities expended upon them often being entirely wasted and nearly always misdirected effort.

"The Great Labour Movement, always provided it is given the Service and Loyalty it has the right to expect from its membership, could tackle all the tasks that these mushroom organisations are formed to deal with, and, because of its prestige and its power, tackle them much more effectively.

"After all, the Labour Movement was formed to safeguard the rights and liberties of the people; it is a Socialist organisation working primarily for the establishment of a new Social and Economic order.

"While keeping the ultimate goal in view, the Labour movement has sought always to alleviate the lot of the people as long as Capitalism survived, and for their pains have been called reformists and charged with peddling palliatives by the very persons and organisations who now peddle palliatives themselves in order to exploit any position that arises.

"When this war is over we shall have another National Government or a Labour Government pledged to Socialism. Those who fritter away their energies on unessential tasks for unstable organisations are helping to create the situation that would favour the return of yet another National Government at the end of the war; those who give their service and loyalty to the Labour Movement are hastening the day when Labour will rule and the task of building for Socialism begin."

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## THE GOOD TIME COMING

There's a good time coming, boys, a good time coming;  
We may not live to see the day, but earth shall glisten in its ray;  
Cannon-balls may aid the truth, but Thought's a weapon stronger;  
We'll win our battle by its aid:—WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

There's a good time coming, boys, a good time coming;  
The pen shall supersede the sword, and Right, not Might, shall be the lord;  
Worth, not birth, shall rule mankind, and be acknowledged stronger:  
The proper impulse has been given:—WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

There's a good time coming, boys, a good time coming;  
War, in all men's eyes, shall be a monster of iniquity;  
Nations shall not quarrel then, to prove which is the stronger,  
Nor slaughter men for glory's sake:—WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

There's a good time coming, boys, a good time coming;  
Hateful rivalries of creed shall not make their martyrs bleed;  
Religion shall be shorn of pride, and flourish all the stronger;  
And Charity shall trim her lamp:—WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

There's a good time coming, boys, a good time coming;  
And a poor man's family shall not be his misery;  
Every child shall be a help to make his right arm stronger:  
The happier he the more he has:—WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

There's a good time coming, boys, a good time coming;  
Little children shall not toil under or above the soil;  
But shall play in healthful fields till limbs and mind grow stronger;  
And every one shall read and write:—WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

There's a good time coming, boys, a good time coming;  
The people shall be temperate, and shall love instead of hate;  
They shall use, and not abuse, and make all virtue stronger;  
The Reformation has begun:—WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

There's a good time coming, boys, a good time coming;  
Let us aid it all we can, every woman, every man;  
Smallest helps, if rightly given, make the impulse stronger:  
'Twill be strong enough one day:—WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

CHARLES MACKAY

### NOTICE TO READERS

For reasons which we know our readers will agree with, we suspended publication of this issue until the reactions of our Movement to the Blitz could be ascertained and authoritative news and advice be given to our Parties.

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